

About Assemblymember Koretz

PAUL KORETZ: A LEADER IN HEALTH ISSUES

Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) was elected to represent the 42nd Assembly District in November of 2000. Mr. Koretz began his political career when he worked to incorporate the City of West Hollywood in 1984 and served as Mayor and City Councilman for 12 years before his election to the California State Assembly. Paul Koretz has been a long time champion of core progressive issues such as strengthening labor, improving public health, reducing gun violence and vigorously fighting for human rights, particularly for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community. Mr. Koretz has also established himself as a leader in developing environmental protection and animal welfare legislation.

While serving the City of West Hollywood, Councilman Koretz helped create the City's extensive social service programming, funding important health organizations such as the L.A. Free Clinic, AIDS Project Los Angeles, and Being Alive. He also authored local ordinances banning smoking in restaurants and other public places, which helped pave the way for similar statewide legislation.

As a state legislator, Paul Koretz has continued to fight for improved public health policies. He introduced AB 221 to raise the legal smoking age to 21. In September of 2002, his AB 2197 was signed into law to provide vital Medi-Cal services to those infected with HIV. In 2003, Koretz authored two bills to regulate the marketing of drugs by pharmaceutical companies in order to help control the cost of drugs for life-threatening illnesses. Also in 2003, Mr. Koretz suggested the creation of the Assembly Select Committee on California's Nursing Shortage and serves as its chair.

Koretz also introduced AB 879 to establish physician guidelines for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis in cases of sexual exposure. This treatment, also known as PEP, can actually prevent many HIV infections after sexual exposure if the four-week drug regime is started within 72 hours from exposure. AB 879 will ensure that doctors have the protocols necessary to effectively administer PEP treatment.

Assemblyman Koretz has become a national leader in the effort to ban the spermicide Nonoxonyl-9 from condoms and lubricants. Once thought to inhibit HIV infection, Nonoxonyl-9 has been shown to actually increase the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. He first quietly negotiated with condom manufacturers. Now that the manufacturers have refused to remove this harmful chemical from their products, Mr. Koretz is working to bring national attention to the fact that the FDA and the condom manufacturers are failing in their primary responsibility to protect public health.

In his continued commitment to improving public health, Assemblyman Koretz has organized a Health Care Advisory Committee, comprised of health industry professionals in and around the 42nd Assembly district. The Advisory Committee meets with Mr. Koretz, advises him on important and timely health issues and helps develop ideas for needed health related legislation.

A life long Democrat, Paul Koretz lives in West Hollywood with his wife Gail, daughter Rachel and their two cats Chagall and Samantha. He loves baseball, science fiction, spending time with his family and enjoying LA's rich diverse cultural life.